REL 3511

Early Christianity

Section: U01

Hybrid/Certified

Spring Term 2027

Course Meeting Information

Class meeting times	
Day:	Th
Time:	11:00 AM - 12:15 PM
Location:	CP 101

Course Time Zone: Eastern Time (ET). Course due dates and times are according to this time zone.

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description

This course will explore the origins and rise of one of the most dynamic movements in human history—the early church. We will cover the first millennium of Christian history and begin by exploring briefly the teachings of Jesus, his death and resurrection, and the early communities of his followers. Some attention will be paid to the separation between Judaism and Christianity. We then consider the spread of Christianity into the wider gentile world and look at how Christians explained their faith to others. Part of this required a logical explanation in terms that educated Greeks and Romans could respond to, and this in turn led to the creation of a rich theological tradition. Meanwhile, the official Roman attitude was one of opposition which meant the church had to endure frequent persecution. The result, however, was surprising. In the early fourth century a new emperor named Constantine arose and embraced the faith that until now had been shunned. Christianity now entered a new stage. Here we explore the relation between Christianity and politics, the holding of the great ecumenical councils, and the development in the role of the Christian clergy. We conclude with a look at the growing separation between the eastern and western parts of the Roman Empire and the fateful split that divided the church in two.

Textbook and Course Materials

The First Thousand Years: A Global History of Christianity

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Robert Louis Wilken

Publisher: Yale University Press

Publication Date: 2013

Copyright Date: 2013

ISBN 10: 300198388

ISBN 13: 978-0300198386

Chapters/Pages: All

Panther Book Pack

Get all required course materials for $22 per undergrad credit hour through Panther Book Pack. You'll be charged automatically unless you opt out within 3 days after the add/drop deadline.

For more details, to compare costs, and to learn how to access your course materials, visit the Panther Book Pack information page on FIU OneStop.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- The most important and distinctive beliefs of the early church and what they mean

- How the Christian message was able to spread in spite of governmental persecution
- The ways in which the church tried to Christianize society in the period after Constantine and what worked and what didn't
- How monasticism both challenged and reinvigorated the institutionalized church
- The relationship between reason and revelation in Christian theology

Expectations of this Course

This is a hybrid course, meaning half of the coursework will be conducted in class, on campus, with the remaining half conducted out of class, including in this Canvas course. Expectations for performance in hybrid courses are the same as in a traditional course. Hybrid courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

Students are expected to:

- **review the getting started page** located in the course modules;
- **introduce yourself to the class** during the first week by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion;

- **take the practice quiz** to ensure that your computer is compatible with the learning management system, Canvas;
- **interact online** with the instructor and peers;
- **review and follow the course calendar** and weekly outlines;
- **Attend class sessions** in person as scheduled;
- **log in** to the course **X times** per week;
- **respond to discussions** by the due date specified;
- **respond to emails** within **X days**;
- **submit assignments** by the corresponding deadline.

The instructor will:

- **log in** to the course **X times** per week;
- **respond to emails** within **24 hours**;
- **grade assignments** and/or provide feedback within **X days** of the assignment deadline.

Assignments & Assessments

Grading

Quizzes 25%

Midterm 20%

Final 20%

Term Paper (9-12 pages) 25%

Attendance and Participation 10%

Grading

A	95 or above	B	83 - 86	C	70 - 76
A-	90 - 94	B-	80 - 82	D	60 - 69
B+	87 - 89	C+	77 - 79	F	59 or less

Schedule of Topics

Week 1[January 11-17] Introduction. The World of Rome. Judaism in the Roman World.

Read: TFTY: pp. xii-xviii, 7-22; DCC: pp. 1-7.

Week 2 January 18-24] The Earliest Christian Communities. The Parting of the Ways with Judaism.

Read: TFTY, pp. 23-38.

Week 3 [January 25-31] Early Persecution. The Christian Response.

Read: TFTY, pp. 39-57; DCC: pp. 7-13.

Week 4 [February 1-7] Gnosticism and Other Conflicts.

Read: TFTY, pp. 58-81; DCC: pp. 29-32, 38-41, 68-78, 81-84.

Week 5 [February 8-14] Rome, Carthage and Alexandria. The Decian-Valerian Persecution and its Aftermath.

Read: TFTY, pp. 82-101; DCC: pp. 13-15 (i), 78-81, 84-85.

Week 6 [February 15-21] The Great Persecution and the Coming of Constantine.

Read: TFTY, pp. 102-108; DCC: pp. 15 (j)-17.

Week 7 [February 22-28] The Reign of Constantine and the Creation of a Christian State.

Read: TFTY, pp. 112-135; DCC: pp. 18-21.

Midterm Examination on Wednesday.

Week 8[March 8-14] Asceticism and Monasticism. Donatism.

Read: TFTY, pp. 136-157; DCC: pp. 85-86.

Spring Break March 1-7

Week 9 [March 15-21] The Road to Nicea. Julian the Apostate.

Read: TFTY, pp. 158-172; DCC: pp. 25-29, 21-22 32-38.

Week 10 [March 22-28] Athanasius and the Triumph of Orthodoxy. The Cappadocians.

Read: TFTY, pp. 173-188; DCC: pp. 41-48, 48-57.

Week 11 [March 29-April 4] The Ascendancy of the Papacy.
Read: SC, pp. 189-200; DCC: pp. 86-91.

Week 12 [April 5-11] Jerome and Augustine.

Read: TFTY, pp. 201-219; DCC: pp. 57-68.

Paper due at beginning of class April 3.

Week 13 [April 12-18] Troubles East and West. The Council of Chalcedon.

Read: TFTY, pp. 222-265.

Week 14 [April 19-24] The Restoration Under Charlemagne. The Great Schism. Towards the Middle Ages

Read: TFTY, pp. 266-276.

Policies & Resources

Before starting this course, please review the Policies & Resources Page in Canvas, which includes comprehensive information on various University and Course Level Policies, such as:

- University Policies
- Accessibility and Accommodations
- Online Etiquette
- Technical Requirements and Skills
- Computer & Digital Literacy Skills
- Course Technology Accessibility Statements and Privacy Policies

- Academic Integrity
- Copyright Statement
- Nondiscrimination Statement
- Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Fair Use Policy

Zoom Video Conference

Zoom is a video conference tool that you can use to interact with your professor and fellow students by sharing screens, chatting, broadcasting live video/audio, and taking part in other interactive online activities.

Zoom meetings can be accessed via the Zoom link in the course navigation menu. Once you click on the Zoom link, it will route you to join the meeting for the respective class session. You will also be able to view upcoming meetings, previous meetings that you have already joined, and meeting recordings. Before joining an actual class session:

- Reference the Zoom Student Tutorials to learn about the tool, how to access your meeting room, and share your screen.
- Access the Zoom Test Meeting Room to test out the software before joining an actual session.

If you encounter any technical difficulties, please contact the FIU Canvas Help Team. Please ensure you contact support immediately upon the issue occurring.

Nondiscrimination Statement

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